

“THE DUCT-FREE ZONE”

By Gerry Wagner, Vice President HVAC Technical Training
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I am very proud of the GREE mini split troubleshooting curriculum I have created. It represents my 20 years or so of personal experience with inverter mini splits as well as what I have learned from attendees of my training events, Yes, I learn as much from them as they do from me!

The troubleshooting curriculum, as it is today, is multi-media based...power-point, video, product manuals and more are used throughout the 4 hour event.

I offer the notes from the class in an MP4 video format to those who attend by having them answer a 9 question survey about the class. One of the 9 questions asks, “how can we make the class better?” The #1 answer consistently is... “provide hands-on training.”

Hands-on training has been difficult, if not impossible for me...any traveling trainer for that matter, to provide in any real productive manner. Here have been the inherent challenges of hands-on training...

- In a post 9/11 world, traveling with equipment is virtually impossible. It's hard enough getting simple laptop computers and power-point projectors through TSA nevertheless HVAC equipment.
- Establishing product labs where such hands-on events could take place is economically challenging, (expensive). I have conducted training events in 43 states...even if we built 43 labs, if the lab is in Jacksonville, FL it is too far for installers / technicians from southern Florida to travel.
- As you all know, the inverter mini split technology is changing, (for the better) almost on an 18 – 24 month cycle. A “brick & mortar” product lab would have to be up-

dated each and every time new technology and new product was introduced.

- The greatest challenge from the instructor's point of view has always been what I call the “one wrench man - two shoulder limitation”. I have conducted hands-on events in the past and what inevitably happens is that only one attendee can be the wrench man, the guy actually turning the wrench on the piece of equipment. The wrench man has two other attendees leaning over his shoulders, observing his work...the other 15 or more attendees can't see what is going on so they disengage. They go for a cup of coffee, have private conversations, go out for a smoke, etc.

About a year ago I started looking for a viable alternative to the traditional hands-on training... and I am thrilled to tell you I found it and it is incredible!

VIRTUAL REALITY VR!

GREE and I are partnering with the leader in HVAC Virtual Reality VR learning, Interplay Learning out of Austin, TX.

In 2019, the GREE troubleshooting training events will feature VR elements to the training where I can take what Interplay Learning calls, “VR in a box” on a plane with me and set up a Virtual Reality GREE lab anywhere in the United States and beyond!

If you have never experienced VR with the hardware, (headset and hand-pods) I won't even try to describe the experience other than to say it will blow your mind! You lose all sense of the “virtual” and you feel like you are in the “reality” of working on an actual piece of equipment.

VR also solves the issue of the “one wrench

man / two shoulders” issue I described earlier.

Only one attendee can be wearing the hardware at one time but, what the wrench man is seeing with the headset the entire class will be seeing simultaneously, projected onto a jumbotron-type screen.

Virtual Reality by its nature is a very social activity. Where in the past, attendees would disengage because they couldn't see what was going on, with VR they not only see, they become involved with the wrench man, offering assistance and direction.

Another aspect to VR is that the training doesn't have to end when the class is over...

3D Virtual Reality is based in a 2D format that can, and will be available online to all GREE troubleshooting event attendees so that they can continue to use the same simulation in a 2D format when they get home or in their shops to further refine their skills.

GREE will be the first inverter mini split manufacturer to offer this incredible technology in their training and I am thrilled to be the trainer they chose to bring it to you!

GREE troubleshooting event dates, times and locations for 2019 will soon be posted at www.TW-Climate.com under the “resources” tab.

If you would like to learn more about Interplay Learning, see their website at www.InterplayLearning.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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